

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 08666 260939Z

13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /098 W
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P R 260905Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1764

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8666

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: MOVEMENT TO AMEND YUSHIN CONSTITUTION

REF: SEOUL 8401

1. FORMER HARD-LINE OPPOSITION POLITICIAN CHANG CHUN-HA
DECEMBER 24 ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE OF THIRTY SOCIAL,
POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS DEDICATED TO AMENDING PRESENT
CONSTITUTION "TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY". CHANG SAID AIM WAS TO
COLLECT AT LEAST ONE MILLION SIGNATURES ON PETITION TO PRESIDENT
PARK URGING HIM TO AMEND CONSTITUTION. HE CLAIMED 5,000 SIGNAT-
URES COLLECTED THUS FAR. HE URGED KOREANS TO SEND THEIR SIGNAT-
URES TO ANY ONE OF THE THIRTY ORGANIZERS OF THE DRIVE. THESE
INCLUDE CARDINAL KIM SU-HWAN, HAM SOK-HON, GEORGE PAEK, KIM
TONG-KIL, KIM KWON-SOK, CHON-KWON-U, BISHOP HAK-SIN, POET KIM
CHI-HA, AND BUDDHIST MONK POP CHONG.

2. NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY REPORTED CHANG'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

3. SOURCE CLOSE TO ORGANIZERS TOLD EMBOFF THE AIM OF CONSTITUT-
IONAL AMENDMENTS WOULD BE TO GUARANTEE INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AND
TO PROVIDE MECHANISM FOR PEACEFUL TRANSFER OF POWER. HE SAID
THAT DESPITE PRESENCE OF MANY POLITICAL FIGURES WITHIN THE
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 08666 260939Z

COMMITTEE, AIM WAS NOT TO CREATE A NEW POLITICAL ORGANIZATION BUT

TO FORM A UNITED FRONT OF ELEMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT.
HE SAID WORK OF COLLECTING SIGNATURES WILL BE ENTRUSTED TO
STUDENTS.

4. COMMENTING ON CHANG CHUN-HA'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF SIGNATURE DRIVE,
DEMOCRATIC UNIFICATION PARTY SPOKESMAN WELCOMED IT AND PLEDGED
SUPPORT. NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMAN CHONG
IL-HYONG AND "NON-MAINSTREAM" FACTION LED BY KIM YONGASAM
VOICED SUPPORT FOR SIGNATURE DRIVE. ON THE OTHER HAND, NDP
SPOKESMAN CHE MUN-SHIK RESERVED JUDGEMENT AND SAID THAT PARTY
CHAIRMAN YU CHIN-SAN WOULD GIVE THE PARTY'S POSITION ON CONSTIT-
UTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN HIS NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON OR
ABOUT JANUARY 10 AFTER PARTY LEADERS HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER.
NDP VICE SPEAKER YI CH'OL-SUNG STATED PRIVATELY THAT THERE IS NO
CONNECTION BETWEEN NDP AND SIGNATURE DRIVE. HE SAID NDP MAINSTR-
EAM DOUBTS WISDOM OF ATTACKING CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF PRESIDENT
PARK'S RULE AT THIS TIME IN VIEW OF LACK OF VIABLE ALTERNATIVE.

5. COMMENT: SIGNATURE DRIVE APPEARS LIKELY TO ADD TO PRESSURE ON
GOVERNMENT AND GIVES PUBLIC FOCUS FOR ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS IN
THEIR CAMPAIGN TO EFFECT FUNDAMENTAL GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE.

PRIMIN'S SCHEDULED DECEMBER 26 ADDRESS WILL CONTAIN GOVERNMENT'S
INITIAL PUBLIC REACTION.
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTITUTION, POLITICAL STABILITY, DEMOCRACY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SEOUL08666
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973127/aaaaaeqj.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: SEOUL 8401
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Nov-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <19-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOVEMENT TO AMEND YUSHIN CONSTITUTION
TAGS: PINT, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005